# A NEW PARADIGM FOR THE ARMY

*A Review Essay by*
F.G. HOFFMAN

Breaking the Phalanx:
A New Design for Landpower in the 21st Century
*by Douglas A. Macgregor*
Foreword by Donald Kagan
Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1997.
283 pp. $65.00
[ISBN 0–275–95793–4]

Defeat of the Greek phalanx by the Romans at Cynoscephalae in 197 B.C. provides the metaphor for thinking about restructuring the U.S. Army in this new book by Douglas Macgregor. As the debate over the revolution in military affairs (RMA) evolves, the assumption that airpower and precision munitions are the predominant instruments of power increases. Given the agenda of the recent Quadrennial Defense Review, many observers believe landpower will be the loser on the technocentric battlefield with its long range strike systems, robots, unmanned aerial vehicles, and sensors. *Breaking the Phalanx* sets out to challenge that assumption. It criticizes both outmoded concepts and force structure and proposes transforming the Army into a 21st century legion to meet the strategic requirements for landpower dominance.

Macgregor argues that the Army must undergo a dramatic change (break its own phalanx) by adjusting to the emerging patterns of information warfare and the initial stages of a revolution in military affairs. He chides "the Army's passion for centralization" and a proclivity for conducting war "by remote control." Such restrictions create severe disadvantages in the information age and are incompatible with successful efforts by the private sector to reengineer in the face of competition and new technology. As he states:

*Trained and organized for a style of war that has changed very little since World War II, current Army organizational structures will limit the control and exploitation of superior military technology and human potential in future operations. Attempts to graft large scale technological change onto old thinking and old structures can only be a temporary expedient; new capabilities demand their own organizations and operational culture.*

To satisfy the demands put on the Army, Macgregor emphasizes the need for ground forces to be prepared to perform the tasks Caesar assigned to his legions—to win wars, restore order, and preserve a stable and prosperous peace. He disparages the idea that landpower is being eclipsed by a revolution in military affairs. It is "not a question as to whether landpower is essential to U.S. strategic dominance, but rather how landpower should be reorganized" to operate jointly with both airpower and seapower to maintain this dominance. To do so, the Army must encourage initiative, develop more flexible and adaptive fighting formations, and field fast-paced combined arms assets as JTF components.

The author spurns the traditional focus of Army force structure, the division, and advocates a new paradigm for executing dominant maneuver. This would involve a transition from industrial age warfighting to prepare for conflicts in which chaos is supreme, weapons of mass destruction are omnipresent, and dominance of the battlespace is paramount.

To meet these challenges, Macgregor poses criteria for force design:

- smaller in size and more numerous in quantity
- warfighting functions at lowest level to generate "radical autonomy"
- modular structure for adaptation and task organizing
- operational and tactical mobility to facilitate dispersion and concentrate effects
- sustainable for extended periods.

This information-age force will be comprised of combat groups. The author spells out four types organized around a $C^4I$ battalion under a brigadier general, with 4,000 to 5,000 soldiers. The *heavy combat* group is his force of decision and has three combined arms battalions with armor and mechanized infantry units of equal size—132 tanks in the former and 132 armored vehicles in the latter. The *heavy recon strike* group is intended for close and deep maneuver; with 126 tanks, 153 armored vehicles, and organic air attack assets, it is similar to the heavy combat group but could operate ahead of such units, shaping the battlespace with Army and Air Force deep battle systems. The *light recon strike* group has 126 armored gun systems and 160 light armored vehicles and can be air lifted to conduct maneuver and contingency operations as well as MOOTW. Last, the *airborne-air assault* group is designed for forced entry and economy of force operations and MOOTW; highly mobile, it has three 700-man infantry battalions with organic air attack assets. Elite light infantry elements are augmented by helicopter assault battalions drawn from a corps level general support aviation group.

Macgregor recognizes that reorganizing the Army into these groups is not revolutionary but would spawn change at the start of a new RMA. He supports Army programmatic efforts to move towards Force XXI, yet stresses the need to push aggressively for training, educational, doctrinal, and organizational changes that will realize the full potential of the information age.

In addition to restructuring the 10-division Army into 26 combat groups, the author aligns the geographical balance of land forces. He foresees three heavy combat groups and one airborne-air assault group in Europe and one heavy recon strike group in Korea. He allocates a similar unit to maintain our presence in Kuwait and bolster deterrent capabilities in the region. The net effect of his force laydown is a reduction in forward deployment by almost 50,000 soldiers.

As some forces return home, two powerful corps are provided to U.S. Atlantic Command for power projection operations outside the continental United States. A flexible deterrent corps of 6 or 7 airborne-air assault and 2 light recon-strike groups is also created, and a decisive force corps composed of 10 to 12 heavy combat groups supported by both rocket artillery and aviation strike assets provides combatant CINCs with a force of decision.

Despite a balanced approach regarding technology, Macgregor goes overboard with advice on how to pay for enhanced landpower. He finds that the proliferation of unmanned autonomous vehicles, cruise missiles, and quiet diesel boats raises serious questions about the vitality of new Navy concepts for littoral warfare. Noting that naval forces are ideal targets for weapons of mass destruction while conducting forced entry, he concludes that forces that rely upon large industrial age platforms like carriers have to depend on a vast array of costly defensive systems. In addition to being risky and capital-intensive, they are not as useful a deterrent as land forces because "forces that must position hundreds of miles away . . . are not likely to be a credible deterrent."

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U.S. Army

This assessment is based on a profound and pessimistic assertion that strikes at the heart of our foreign policy and defense policy—the ability to influence events far from home. "The realities of the RMA," the author asserts, "reinforce America's need for regional partners who can provide access without resort to potentially costly forced entry operations." Without the Army in regions of vital interest, U.S. forces are unlikely to gain access in future conflicts because of threats from weapons of mass destruction and cruise missiles against vulnerable, industrial age Navy platforms. "In contrast," Macgregor continues, "dispersed, highly mobile ground forces present poor targets for these weapons and land based aviation can operate from protected locations beyond the range of these weapons." Based exclusively on an analysis of Southwest Asia, he concludes that joint operations that are not dependent primarily on sea-based forces have a greater chance of success. "Critical port and airfield facilities can then be isolated, attacked, and seized from the land more cheaply, efficiently, and at less risk to American lives than from the sea."

With such a limited view of the potential for RMA applications at sea, readers should not be surprised that the author identifies naval programs as the largesse to pay for defense investments in the next millennium. Among current defense programs regarded as weak in terms of their strategic justification, Macgregor identifies $150 billion in potential savings. Some $120 billion comes from the Navy and $4 billion from disestablishing National Guard divisions. The Navy F/A–18 program is the biggest target, but aircraft carriers, destroyers, and assault amphibians are also sacrificed. Had the author not focused exclusively on landpower applications of RMA he might have recognized that the same technologies and similar organizational arrangements apply in the other services and offer greater mobility and force protection. Apparently only the Army and potential enemies are positioned to reap the RMA whirlwind.

The author has an excellent grasp of history but has done only cursory research, much of it drawn from press accounts. His experience provides a wealth of background for assessing future landpower capabilities but clearly runs short when evaluating a full mix of operational capabilities. Accordingly, the capabilities of the other service are sometimes misstated. Cost data is generally adequate save for cases such as the V–22, whose price is exaggerated and mission limited to getting the Marines to the beach. Naval officers will agree that technology proliferation challenges more traditional approaches to sea-based operations. But there are many concepts, experiments, and technology demonstrations that overcome such challenges. Soldiers and marines should not argue over the need for land forces in the next century. In fact, leading combat developers from both services join in support for the continued relevance and strategic flexibility of ground forces.

The weakness of *Breaking the Phalanx* is its lack of a strategic framework or a substantive assessment of national interests to support proposed shifts in resources. The author presents a strong historical argument but no conclusions based on an analytical framework. What is the impact of cutting 50,000 forward deployed troops, and how would such a reduction square with the conclusion that land forces are superior for deterrence? Although Macgregor's argument for a strong landpower component is conclusive, the lack of a strategic context precludes making serious decisions or tradeoffs in defense planning.

There remains, however, much utility in a work that forcefully argues for a need to temper the current American infatuation with technology. There is a good deal with which to agree, particularly the caution that "military strategy based primarily on ships, planes, and precision-guided missiles forfeits military flexibility and courts strategic irrelevance in the 21st century." Conventional land forces armed with tanks and armored fighting vehicles will not accomplish every future mission. While *Breaking the Phalanx* offers a more agile and adaptive structure for such forces, its combat groups in and of themselves do not fit the bill across the conflict spectrum.

Macgregor makes a compelling case for reorganizing the Army. But his limited familiarity with naval warfare—including new technology and programs that support the description of littoral operations in *Forward . . . From the Sea* or the Marine concept outlined in *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*—undermines his conclusions. Such ideas contribute as much to dominant maneuver and force protection as would a modern legion, albeit with capital investments.

With fewer Americans stationed overseas, U.S. strategic interests dictate a continuing need for rapidly deployable forces able to arrive at points far distant from our shores prepared to fight. That might require operating from sea bases to reduce vulnerabilities and increase maneuver space, but we should not have to operate at the whim of another country. All the land forces in the world are worthless if they cannot be projected ashore and sustained. A nation that cannot create its own opportunities and project power to protect its interests is not a viable global power. JFQ

# 'L' IS FOR LOGISTICS

*A Book Review by*
JOSEPH E. MUCKERMAN II

The Big 'L': American Logistics in World War II
An Industrial College of the Armed Forces Study
*Edited by Alan L. Gropman*
Washington: National Defense University Press, 1997. 447 pp. $28.00
[ISBN 0–16–048668–8]

For every thousand books published on military strategy, one deals with logistics—that is, with the creation and sustainment of military power. This lack of attention is troubling because, as the introduction to *The Big 'L': American Logistics in World War II* reminds us, "The United States used a logistics strategy to build armaments in depth rather than in width." That conflict was won by the Allies because America became the arsenal of democracy. Britain and the Soviet Union held off the Axis powers long enough for the United States to assemble that arsenal and thereby brought vastly superior military potential to bear against Germany and Japan.

*The Big 'L'* is logistics writ large. The volume opens with an essay detailing the fits and starts of industrial mobilization and goes on to document economic mobilization, the building of the U.S. infrastructure, the lend-lease program (and how it gave us a leg up in the months leading up to Pearl Harbor), and logistics in the European and Pacific theaters—the combat payoff.

One can't read this record of wartime logistics without being impressed, even awed. Yes, mistakes were made, delays occurred, and opportunities were lost because generating the power to wage war takes time. Again and again the refrain from both the European and Pacific theaters was that logistics considerations constrained strategic possibilities and strategic decisions drove logistic requirements. Thus it was and thus it always will be.

But *The Big 'L'* is more than a treatise on wartime logistics. It portrays the development of grand strategy—how the resources of an entire country were marshalled and deployed to achieve national security objectives. The argument is frequently made today that Big 'L'-type logistics are passé. Since the 1980s the chorus has been: "We will never again mobilize on a large scale and, in fact, future wars will be come-as-you-are and off-the-shelf events."

To overcome this ingrained aversion to the study of logistics, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces—which sponsored the symposium that led to this book—should produce a series of studies under the rubric of the Big 'L' on Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War, and the Gulf War. That would yield valuable lessons learned and assist in developing grand strategy for the next century. The authors of this volume on World War II offer a model for examining the balance of ends and means—strategic requirements and logistic capabilities—for succeeding generations of war college students. If we pay proper attention to the Big 'L' there will not be a strategy-resource gap and our national security will be assured. JFQ

Anzio, March 1944.

Naval Historical Center

Colonel Joseph E. Muckerman II, USA (Ret.), served as director of emergency planning in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

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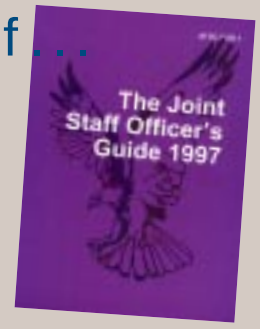


A new edition of Armed Forces Staff College Publication 1, *The Joint Staff Officer's Guide 1997*, is now available. This illustrated 450-page volume provides a comprehensive summary of details on joint planning and execution that cannot be found elsewhere. It presents an overview of the players, processes, and procedures used in the joint arena as well as a wide range of reference material of interest to joint staffs as well as officers in the field and fleet.

AFSC Pub 1 can be found on the Internet (at www.afsc.edu) and also can be accessed through the Joint Electronic Library. Copies are for sale from the Superintendent of Documents at $38.00 each by writing to: U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, or phoning (202) 512–1800 [GPO stock no. 008–020–01422–2]. In addition, it may be purchased from the Defense Automated Printing Service (DAPS) for $14.00 by contacting Don Mruk in San Diego, California, at (619) 556–7187/DSN 526–7187 or Everett Morton in Norfolk, Virginia, at (757) 444–7724/DSN 464–7724 (extension 19). JFQ

# THE GREAT WAR AND THE BIRTH OF ARMORED WARFARE

*A Book Review by*

WILLIAMSON MURRAY

Men, Ideas, Tanks:
British Military Thought and Armoured Forces, 1903–1939
*by J.P. Harris*
Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1995.
342 pp. $79.95
[ISBN 0–7190–3762–X]

Since military institutions so rarely get to practice their profession, military history provides the uncertain and ambiguous laboratory for thinking about the business of preparing for war. How uncertain and ambiguous that laboratory can be is suggested by the constant and steady expansion of our knowledge of events even as far back as World Wars I and II. In fact one could argue with considerable justification that it has only been in the last two decades that military historians really have begun to unravel what happened in the final years of World War I.

Worse for lay readers as they attempt to make sense of the welter of opinions, there is also the difficulty of periodization—that the Great War began in 1914 and ended in 1918, the interwar period began in 1919 and ended in 1939, and so forth. Yet the generals of 1919 did not suddenly recognize that their institutions had entered a wholly new period with the ending of World War I and that they would thereafter have to innovate and prepare for the next war in an austere climate. In fact, to fully grasp the evolution of armored warfare one must look at the period from the early 1900s to 1939 in its entirety and place the events of peacetime and war in a single developmental framework.

Finally, in dealing with armored warfare, particularly in Great Britain, there is a third and equally substantial obstacle. The shadows cast by both Basil H. Liddell Hart and J.F.C. Fuller still dominate the landscape, distorting as much as informing the debate.

J.P. Harris, senior lecturer in the Department of War Studies at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, has written a splendid study that has linked diverse threads to place the development of armored warfare in the British army in a coherent and intelligent framework. And that framework examines the problem of the tank from inception through to the outbreak of World War II. This is an important study because it examines the institutional and intellectual processes of adaptation and innovation in war as well as peacetime. What makes *Men, Ideas, Tanks: British Military Thought and Armoured Forces, 1903–1939* particularly useful for Americans is that it is a story of initially successful innovation under the pressure of war, followed by growing failures that would exercise a baneful influence over British efforts during World War II. Harris is never afraid to express a strong opinion; in my view that is a great strength, though there are moments when one may well disagree with aspects of his argument. But overall the research is impeccable, criticisms of the historical wisdom generally on target, and the effect of his thesis clear, incisive, and at times brilliant. In fact, Harris has combined a solid grasp of secondary sources with detailed and careful research in British army records.

The traditional view of armored warfare development in Britain has depicted a few lonely, brilliant individuals—Liddell Hart and Fuller in particular—leading the charge against troglodytes in the War Office—first to develop the tank and thereby to avoid the terrible killing battles of 1917 and 1918 and then to innovate during the interwar period to prepare for the next war. Thereafter the struggle resumed with Fuller, Liddell Hart, and their allies fighting a valiant and losing battle against entrenched orthodoxy. Much of that traditional picture was already in tatters before Harris arrived on the field. But he places armored development within a general framework and combines a number of problems which historians have examined only in the specific.

The book shows that the tank got enthusiastic support from Douglas Haig from the first. Moreover, Harris indicates the considerable difficulty the British experienced in trying to fit a new weapons system into an increasingly complex tactical framework. It was not clear how the tank could help British infantry and artillery break the deadlock until the last summer of the war. Finally, tank advocates, particularly Fuller, may have hindered as much as helped initial employment of armored fighting vehicles. Harris demolishes Fuller's claim that his "Plan 1919" represented a revolutionary approach to warfare; in fact Harris emphasizes that there was "gross overstatement" and a general unwillingness in Fuller's arguments to recognize what had happened during the German spring offensive of 1918. Haig at least had the sense to realize that no matter how useful the tank might prove, they "could only succeed as part of a force 'of all arms in proper combination'"—something Fuller never fully recognized.

After the war the debate between armor advocates and the army leadership grew ever more hostile. By and large Liddell Hart and Fuller won exchanges in the popular press and the literature of defense analysis through their pens and arguments. But in fact their overwhelming emphasis on the tank as a war winner by itself was as distortive as the general failure by the army to address the problems raised by the war. One criticism of *Men, Ideas, Tanks* is that it is probably too kind to an army hierarchy that all too often refused to examine the lessons of the last war with enthusiasm. The first lessons learned committee formed in the British army did not appear until 1932, 12 years after Hans von Seeckt organized some 57 different committees in Germany to study World War I. But the criticism that Harris levels against the military reformers and the damage that they managed to do while inflating their own reputations is right on target.

This is an important book for any officer interested in peacetime innovation. It suggests the dangers ahead—that any advantage in military affairs is a wasted resource unless it is accompanied by diligent, serious, and honest study of both the past and present. Harris has done a great service by laying out the development of the tank in real rather than imagined parameters. JFQ

Williamson Murray is coeditor of *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* and *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War.*

# WAR AND PEACE IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER

*A Book Review by*
WILLIAM H. LEWIS

Civil Military Operations
in the New World
*by John T. Fishel*
Foreword by Fred C. Woerner
Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1997.
269 pp. $65.00
[ISBN 0–275–94797–1]

As many recent military interventions demonstrate, the United States often lacks a clear strategic vision of the political military end state for multinational peace operations. The basic components of national strategy must be involved: ends (objectives), ways (concepts to be applied), and means (resources to be allocated). As John Fishel observes in *Civil Military Operations in the New World*, "More than ever in future operations we need to determine what our political military objectives will be when war is finally terminated." He believes that the principles of war should be applied to peace operations of the complexity and variety that have claimed U.S. involvement in the post-Cold War world.

At the heart of the Fishel thesis is the indispensable role that civil affairs—a function largely vested in the Army Reserve—and other combat support and service support capabilities can play in shaping post-conflict political and economic situations. A specialist in the realm of civil military operations (CMO), he provides case studies which support his rigorous look at how CMOs were organized and introduced at each stage of operations in Panama, Kuwait, Northern Iraq, Somalia, and Haiti. Most CMO involvements proved of limited success in shaping post-war environments. Fishel attributes these unsatisfactory outcomes to lack of precision in establishing desired political military end states.

In Panama the United States failed to specify the nature or style of democracy it wanted to succeed Noriega. Planners at the Departments of State and Defense assumed that simply holding free and unfettered elections would prove decisive in entrenching democratic values and traditions. In Desert Storm the National Command Authorities were unclear on the course to follow once Iraqi forces were ejected from Kuwait. While encouraging Shiite and Kurdish dissidence, they wanted to avoid the political fragmentation in Iraq; yet no contingency plan existed to provide emergency aid for civilians caught up in the fighting.

Fishel is encouraged by the skill and imagination with which CMO planning was organized at the outset of the Kuwait crisis. However, he concludes that an almost unbridgeable gulf exists between joint force commanders and CMO planners on dealing with war termination. In Panama, Desert Storm, and Provide Comfort, basic CMO doctrine was only partially observed, reflecting failure to properly integrate combat forces and civil affairs specialists.

There are also important lessons for senior policymakers. As Fishel reminds us, the U.S. political leadership expressed great expectations for establishing democratic institutions in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia. However, no meaningful guidelines were forthcoming on the nature or type of democratic institutions to foster. Moreover, the end state envisioned by planners did not reflect the political agenda, resulting in a "disconnected policy and strategy between the military and civilian agencies of the U.S. Government."

*Civil Military Operations* is an invaluable contribution to the growing body of literature on peace operations. One fundamental flaw in the Fishel thesis, however, is his contention that every peace operation must be contemplated within the framework of war termination. U.S. goals may involve rescue/humanitarian assistance (Rwanda), peace monitoring (Western Sahara), separation of rival forces (the Sinai and Bosnia), and peacemaking (Bosnia again). In those cases it would be a stretch to claim that American involvement—in concert with the forces of other nations—was of the traditional imposed-war termination genre. As we have recently witnessed, the justification and purposes for which multinational forces are introduced in crisis situations are varied and complex. Unfortunately, there is no silver bullet in CMO doctrine that addresses all these complexities and organizes the resources to cope with them. JFQ

U.S. (Larry Lane)

**Peace dividend.**

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